

Series: James
Title: Consider Job
Text: James 5: 1-8
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The epistle of James begins with an encouragement to be patient during trials. What kind of trials. Notice how the letter ends:

James 5: 19: Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20: Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

From beginning to end James points out what it is to err from the truth. And he instructs us in the only way that brethren are to be turned from error. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." (James 1: 18.) Through James the Spirit of God says,

James 1: 19: Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.

The brother who errs from the truth is like the fatherless and the widow, he needs to be restored with the sure mercies of David.

James 1: 27: Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

What do we visit erring brethren with? We visit with the word of truth. The same gospel of Christ by which a child of God is born of the Spirit of God, is the gospel by which he will be turned from error.

- Not by unbridling the tongue
- Not by showing a respect of persons
- Not by taking a magisterial air as if you were his master.
- Not by blessing God and condemning with the same tongue--speaking truth, but condemning a brother as you say it.
- Not by praying the Father to consume it upon these lusts.
- Not by speaking evil one of another, condemning, grieving a brother
- Not by boasting in your will

These are the things that James deals with throughout the letter. These are the very lusts of the flesh which flare up when we are tried by an erring brother or sister. No matter how much of a trial it presents to you, an erring brother is turned from his error by the one Lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy, through the gospel of his grace.

James 3: 13: Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. 14: But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15: This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16: For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. 17: But the wisdom that is

from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18: And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace....James 4: 1: From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?...7: Submit yourselves therefore to God.

Walking in the perfect law of liberty, being a doer of the word and not a hearer only, is to submit to God as did Abraham, fully convinced that "God is able to raise up, even from the dead." Now, chapter 5 begins with these words

James 5:1: Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

I began looking at this passage with only an eye toward rich, wicked men. But as I got down to verses 10 and 11, I began to do what the verse says:

James 5: 10: Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. 11: Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

The prophets suffered affliction because they "spoke in the name of the Lord." They did not turn from this one method of grace--they set forth the unsearchable riches of Christ and patiently endured. Though they were afflicted they suffered it patiently.

James points us to consider Job. Our text here speaks of rich men. Job was a rich man: rich in temporal possessions, but more rich in faith. God said of Job, "there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" What did Job endure? He endured the loss of all things--children and possessions? Yes. Bodily affliction? Yes. But he endured something else that goes right along with what James has been speaking of. Job endured the condemning tongues of men who were rich in their own conceit.

- They spoke to Job as masters over Job--in much they offended all.
- They used their tongues to bless God--they said many truthful things about God, but they did so cursing--condemning--Job.
- Their prayers were not for God's glory but to be right before Job.
- Their force upon Job was a sort of boasting in their own will, not submission to God.
- They were rich in their own estimation of themselves.

Yet, according to the LORD's word, Job spoke to them that which was right.

Proposition: It may be that James is staying with the same subject he has been dealing with up to this point. He may be comparing that "masterly, condemning, haughty spirit" he has been speaking of--the kind we see in Job's three friends--with that of the carnally rich men of this earth. Let's go through these scriptures with that in mind.

James 5:1: Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. 2: Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. 3: Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

The Lord defines a rich man this way:

Luke 2: 21:...he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

God gives us earthly possessions for us to provide for the needy.

Carnally, wicked, unbelieving rich men heap up these treasures for themselves rather than giving them. God makes believers rich by giving the believer the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus, as well as temporal things. He does so for us to visit the needy in their affliction, not to hoard them up for ourselves.

The Lord spoke of haughty, self-righteous men who lay up treasures of religious deeds for themselves, and keep back the gospel:

Matthew 5: 22: Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23: And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

The apostle Paul used a similar expression in Romans 2. Paul is dealing with the same haughty, self-righteousness that James has been dealing with:

Romans 2: 3: And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? 4: Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? 5: But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

The rich man is heaping up the wrath of God and likewise the self-righteous man who is rich in law-keeping and binding of men. Like rich men bite and devour to obtain riches, vain religionists bite and devour. Both are like wolves. The Holy Spirit says, "howl for your miseries that shall come upon you."

Application: Give a needy brother your coat if he his cold and clothe the erring brother with gospel of the garment of Christ's righteousness.

James 5: 4: Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

Rich men often keep back the wages of their laborers.

Sometimes they don't pay them on time, or change what they promised to pay, or don't pay in proportion to the work performed.

Deuteronomy 24:15: At his day thou shalt give *him* his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he *is* poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin unto thee.

The Lord's laborers are his faithful witnesses.

Matthew 9:37: Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; 38: Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Believers' are not hirelings, but willing bond-servants. Our Master is in heaven. God's preachers, and brethren, are laborers who plant and water, with the word of the gospel. God our Husbandman gives the increase. Those born of God are a kind of firstfruits of his creating. And like the laborer reaping down the fields, our hearts are set upon one thing--Christ our Lord.

Job was God's laborer. His friends held back the Word of comfort which Job's heart was set upon and which he needed.

Isaiah 3:10: Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

Yet, the LORD said that Job spoke to them that which is right.

The cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

The LORD of Sabaoth means "the Lord of hosts." It is used in the Old Testament whenever God's people were in great misery, in need of defense and protection.

The LORD is the Lord of hosts. He is commander-in-chief of all creatures, all angels, all men, all thunder and lightning, all beasts of the field, even all diseases and plagues. They are all ready at his call. It is insanity to contend with God who can command legions. The Lord heard and he spoke to those three friends who came to Job:

Job 42: 7: And it was *so*, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job; the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite; my wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me *the thing that is* right, as my servant Job *hath*.

Believer, this is the LORD who will contend for you against your oppressors. But remember, brethren, this is the LORD who is able to make the gospel we preach effectual in the hearts of one another.

James 5:5: Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

"Wanton" means luxury. You nourished your hearts, as if every day was a feast day. God does not forbid us to use pleasures, but he forbids us to *live* in pleasures. It is one thing to take delights, but another thing when delights take us. Many who claim to preach Christ do the same in religion--hirelings.

Philippians 3: 18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

James 5:6: Ye have condemned *and* killed the just; *and* he doth not resist you.

James 2: 6: Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?

Rich men sue--prosecute before the law. They kill by taking away their good names, by withholding from them the fruit of their own labor. Let the believer be not like the rich men of this world. Instead of saying to Job "it shall be well with him" his friends unjustly prosecuted Job. Their conclusion to Job was that God deals with men in this life according to their outward behavior; that God did not afflict good men, in the manner Job was afflicted; and that wicked men were always punished. By this they grieved and condemned Job as being a bad man. They withheld the comfort of Christ which Job desired. Yet, Job told them what James is saying here: wicked men enjoy great prosperity, which God's saints do not. He told them that men's characters are not to be judged by the outward afflictions they suffer. The Lord said that Job spoke right.

Application:

Be patient, wait on the Lord.

James 5:7: Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

If you are oppressed--whether by men rich in temporal things or men rich in self-righteousness--be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. But I think something else is also being said: to you who are laboring to restore an erring brother or sister or to bear witness of Christ--be not like the rich man of this world and the rich man of self-righteousness--but be patient, unto the coming of the Lord.

Consider the illustration:

The farmer plants the seed--sow the word. The farmer waits on the Lord to give the increase to make the word effectual. You do the same.

James 5:8: Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

Job had to wait on the LORD to save him from the oppression of his friends. But Job also had to wait on the LORD to make the truth effectual in the hearts of his erring brethren.

Do not grudge one another.

James 5:9: Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

Don't murmur, grumble, speak evil one of another--behold, the judge standeth at the door. Remember there is one Lawgiver, he alone is able. He draweth nigh. He standeth before the

door. Note something else: Job's friends stood before the door--that is, they blocked Christ the Door, rather than opening Christ the Door up to him.

Matthew 23:13: But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

James 5: 10: Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. 11: Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Those men who came to Job thought they were restoring him, but in the end it was Job who the Lord used to restore them and doing so, the LORD restored Job.

Job 42: 8: Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant...10: And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.